

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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THE WICKED WOODS OF TOBEREEVIL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "HESTER'S HISTORY."

CHAPTER XXXII. THE TRUE LOVE.

Now that they had so exacting an inmate as Miss Archbold at Monasterlea, it required all May's industry to keep things as they ever had been, to stop little gaps in the household arrangements made by the irregular demands of the visitor upon everybody's time. Katherine was pleased to leave her gowns about her room upon the floor in heaps, her petticoats flung on the bed, her slippers in different corners, and the delicate silk hose tossed among her cambric pocket-handkerchiefs. Her cosmetics and hair-brushes, her pin-boxes and cream-pots, her essence-bottles and jewel-cases, and powder-puffs, together with the novel she had been reading, were found every morning in wild confusion upon her toilet-table.

Bridget was expected to reduce the place to order, and this was a work of time; for what with her awe which made her hesitate, her curiosity which led her to pry, and her admiration which forced her to pause over every new object that she touched, the morning was pretty well filled with the discharge of her new duty. Nannie grumbled, and Miss Martha sighed; the time had gone past when the old lady could sing Miss Archbold's praises. But the burden fell on May.

To-day she got her work done early, for she had it in her mind that she would meet Paul coming home from Tobereevil. The day had brightened since Katherine's going forth, and there was a promise of spring in the air, if not its actual presence.

A breath from April would wake all nature into life. The hedgerows were thick with buds, and alive with birds, who already scented the coming summer in the air. A lark soared in an ecstasy into clouds through which the sun was breaking his way. Tinges of soft green had crept out among the long purple and brown undulations of the moorland, and touches of pale yellow, that would soon be green, gilded the edges of reddish furrows in the recently ploughed fields. As May went along she could not see Paul, and when she came to the woods she shrank from plunging into them. They only, of all the landscape, kept a frown upon their faces; but it took a great deal of sun to make them bright. Near their outskirts lay pretty little sylvan groves, which seemed perpetually announcing with their smiles to the world that they had crept out from under the shadow of the curse, and that they had only a distant kinship with the trees of the dreadful woods. In one of these, which commanded a view of Simon's avenue, May took her seat upon a fallen tree. A stream flowed past her feet which but yesterday had been frozen, and which was rejoicing noisily in its freedom. Clumps of primroses had nestled themselves under the shelter of mossy stones at its edge, so that they could taste its delicate spray, and enjoy its genial company. Violets had decked out the splay roots of an old thorn which had dragged itself from the earth by sheer weight of its mighty age. This stream, with its flower-borders and mosses, its old thorn and fallen oak, was in a warm nook where Spring could not but choose to show herself early. It skirted a vast bog, whose rugged brown outlines swept behind in sombre bleakness, and made a bit of beauty all the more gladsome because of ugliness close at hand.

The girl sat down on a fallen tree to watch for the first appearance of a human figure in the distance. The past three months had left their traces upon May. Her face was always pale now, except when a blush or a spring wind made it bloom for a passing moment. Her eyes had grown larger and darker, and had a look of hidden suffering. Pauses like this were very difficult to her, for she could not afford much brooding when in trouble, was not given to tears, and did not do what women call fretting. Grief dealt so hardly with her that for life's dear sake she was driven into resistance.

This was not the romantic sorrow of the girl of a year ago, whose lover had gone away, but the quiet woe of a woman who had sworn to be faithful. Grief that is most unselfish is always hardest to bear. A selfish heart will comfort itself with the little merciful compensations which life is ever providing, but the heart that aches for another cannot even relish peace while evil has hold of the one beloved. May plucked violets for occupation, and made them up into nosegays, and wound them together in wreaths; one she would give to Paul for his button-hole, and she would wear another in her bosom. But she would not give any to Katherine. She and Paul should share at least a wreath of violets between them.

At this childish work her heart eased itself a little, till, looking up, she saw figures in the distance among the trees—Paul and Katherine; but they were not coming quite her way. The flowers fell from her fingers; her hands dropped in her lap. She had told Paul in the morning that she would, if possible, meet him at this spot, but he had met Katherine instead, and she was leaning on his arm. It seemed to May that they were walking as lovers walk. She sighed a little, and then the blow descended on her heart, her senses went away, and she fell from her seat, and lay, forgetful of all trouble, among the primroses.

At the other side of the bank, and right behind the great thorn, an old woman was toiling down in a cutting of the ugly bog. She was the person known in the country as "Bid the thraveller," and she had been busy since daybreak cutting long sods of the black reeking turf, and setting them up on their ends together in little stacks. By-and-bye she would come back to them, and spread them out to get thoroughly dried, and against autumn she would

have accumulated a store of firing to present to some kindly householder, at whose fireside she was used to sit. Her work done for the present, she washed her hands and feet in the brown bog-water, and put on her old cloak, which had been laid aside carefully, and picked up her stick, and began to climb the bank, that she might rest in the grove a little before beginning her evening journey to seek a shelter for the night. Old women can love pretty places as well as young girls, and May's fallen tree was a favourite resting-place for Bid, who might often be found there on fine days, knitting busily in the solitude.

Bid felt a little uneasy as she climbed the bank, for as she tied on her cloak she had heard a sigh float past her ear across the loneliness and silence of the bog. It seemed as if the wind had bent the bog-blossoms, and they had whispered, "My heart is broken." No sound heard here need be surprising, where the air was full of spirits, but Bid did not quite like to be the confidante of creatures of whom she knew not the dwelling-place, nor the nature. The very bending and bowing of the ranks and files of white fleecy blossoms that rocked themselves towards her like living things in trouble made the old creature shiver, and almost believe that they had spoken. She crept up the bank, and crossed herself as she set foot in the little grove; but superstition fled like a bat at blink of daylight when she saw a fellow-creature lying prone on the earth.

Bid knew the girl from the abbey. Not once, nor twice, but many scores of times had she been warmed and fed by her in the kitchen at Monasterlea, and the old woman was afflicted at this piteous sight. She knew now whose heart was broken. Bid was shrewd and sympathetic; there was not a love-story in the country that she did not know of, and she had early scented trouble when things got amiss with Paul and his promised wife. She had called Katherine a witch before that young lady had been a week at Monasterlea; and a few minutes since she had described this witch and May's lover coming out of the woods.

"Heart's blood of the hope of the country!" murmured the old woman, making a kind of mournful song as she chafed the girl's cold fingers. "Ye brought trouble on yer head when ye promised this bit o' a hand to a Finiston. Sure the devil that is tackled wid Paul has took a woman's shape this time! But ye'll rise out o' her, avourneen—ye'll rise out o' her yet!"

The words filtered through May's ears as she lay on the arm of the good Samaritan. She sat up and wondered how her secret had been found out.

"Deary, don't mind an ould woman!" said Bid. "Sure I love Paul Finiston myself, an' I have sworn, on my knees, that the devil'll never get him. I niver put up a prayer that wasn't answered in the end; an' harm shall not get Paul while his friends has tongues to pray!"

May sat on a stone opposite Bid, who exhorted her thus, with finger uplifted and a sybil-like look on her weather-beaten face.

"The curse is against me," said May, despondingly. "It is creeping closer round him, and I am too weak to save him from it."

Bid looked frightened. "You won't give him up, avournen?" she asked.

"Give him up!" said May, and she rose to her feet, glowing with sudden energy. "No, I will not."

"God love you, my jewel!" said Bid, "for you're fit to have the hope of the country in yer hands. Of course ye'll manage him well, for the quality does know how to deal wid one another; but I'm thinkin' it's mostly the same wid high an' low, an I wanst lost a lover wid floutin' an' poutin' at him. He got tired o' a cross face, an' went off to seek a pleasanter wan; so you just despise yon flauntin' hussy, an' smile at Paul Finiston till ye smile the devil out o' him!"

"You are a kind friend," said May; and she began to think of how strange it was that she should thus give her confidence to a beggar-woman. But she put down her pride with a true instinct. "Ask the people to pray," she said, "for you are right in saying that this is the affair of the country."

"Ay!" said Bid, "it is the affair of the whole country; for if Paul Finiston gets into evil hands there'll be another miser o' Tobereevil, an' a star the less in heaven. An' do you keep up yer heart an' smile; for they say the devil does fly away before the smile o' patience."

May went home with the beggar's lesson in her heart, and, coming through the kitchen-garden, she met Katherine tripping along, carrying a large carrot by its green top, which was soiled with clay, having just left the ground. The guest was singing loudly, as if in the highest spirits. She seldom sang except when unable to control the outpouring of her

triumph over some one; and she liked to please, except when she could have her will without the trouble of doing so. Her voice was shrill, and as she sang, coming down the kitchen-garden, there was a cruel harshness in her song which might have made the birds shiver. It was dusk, but the girls could see one another as they met between the ranks of the cabbages, and May wondered greatly at Katherine's fancy for vegetables. The latter stopped her song upon a high, sudden note, while she picked the clay in pieces from her carrot.

"Perhaps you are looking for Paul," she said, with a careless air of superior knowledge. "He is gone home to his farmhouse. He will not be here to-night."

"I dare say he is busy," said May.

Katherine shrugged her shoulders and smiled. "I don't think he has much business in his head," she said. "I believe he is not in the humour for our company. He is not happy in his mind. Why don't you make him happy?"

"He has a good deal of care," said May, not noticing the insolence of Katherine's tone. "He will be happier by-and-bye."

"Perhaps he will," said Katherine, and turned her back on May, and went on towards the house.

In Paul's absence conversation was apt to flag of an evening between the ladies at Monasterlea. Since experience had revealed Katherine's character to Miss Martha, the young lady took no longer any trouble to amuse her hostess; who treated her, nevertheless, with all politeness and attention, for hospitality is a tyrant, and the unwelcome guest must be treated like the guest who is most desired.

Katherine knew this, and made herself comfortable accordingly. On this evening, while May sewed and Miss Martha knitted, she yawned over the pages of a novel. Her entertainers were not sorry when she bade them good-night and yawned herself away to her own chamber.

When she had gone, May turned with her sewing to the fire, for she could not bear Miss Martha's eyes. She had known for a long time that her aunt wanted to speak to her, and she felt that she could not endure the things that the old lady would surely say. But now she plied her needle wildly, knowing that the moment had come when she must listen to a lecture with patience; that a conversation was going to take place which it would be very hard for her to forget.

Miss Martha was evidently making a

great struggle to begin. Her knitting-needles flew faster, and pecked at each other wickedly, never heeding dropped stitches. Her mouth twitched, and her chin went up in the air and came down again.

"May," she said, "is it possible that you have got nothing to say to me; now when we are alone, and not likely to be interrupted?"

"I, Aunt?"

"Yes, you. Who else? Is it possible that you have nothing to complain of?"

"Complain! Why should I complain?"

"We shall not get on very far if you echo every word I speak," said Miss Martha, testily. "You may as well be frank with me—not look on me as an enemy. I am old and fidgety, but I am not at all sure that you have another friend in the world."

May's lips moved, but no sound came. She tried again and said, "Only one besides, Aunt."

Miss Martha's irritation was soothed away. She drew her chair a little nearer, stretched out her soft wrinkled hand, and laid it on May's shoulder. "Are you sure that you have that one, May? Come, trust the poor old woman! Inward grieving will rot the soundest heart."

May's lips quivered, but her mouth soon steadied itself, and her eyes kept dry and bright.

"Now turn round to me, for I want to see your face. If you have got nothing to tell me, then I must speak out to you; I wish in the name of Heaven that you had never set your eyes on Paul Finiston."

"You must not say that."

"Yes, I will say it; for I fear he will break your heart. I will say, also, that I thought you had more spirit. If I were in your place I would bid good-bye to him at once, and let him go about his business."

"I can't do it, Aunt; and if I could, I dare not."

"Dare not!"

"Oh, do you forget? Paul is not like another man. It is the shadow that he has always dreaded that has come over him, that is all."

"Fiddle-de-dee!" said Miss Martha; "that old nonsense! I tell you I won't listen to it; it is a sin against Heaven. I thought you had more sense than to get smitten with his madness."

"It may be madness," said May; "but madness is a misfortune, not a crime. Something has gone wrong with him; I

will not make it worse by leaving him when he most wants a friend."

Miss Martha winced. Simon's words, "You who deserted me in my need," came across her ears, as they had many a time done since the day they were spoken. But May's doctrine was not acceptable to Miss Martha's faith. It must lie in people's own will, whether to be bad or good.

"Fiddle-de-dee," said Miss Martha again. "People walk into crooked ways with their eyes open, and then they rail at fate for not putting their feet into straight ones."

"I don't think Paul is deliberately walking in crooked ways," said May; "and unless he himself throws me off I will hold to him even at the cost of being thought to have no spirit. I know him better than you do, and I believe there are stranger things in the world than you think of."

"You think he is bewitched, so that he doesn't know what he is doing," said Miss Martha in amazement.

"I cannot say what I think. He is under some influence which seems to have changed his whole nature. If he be quite delivered up to it the change will be completed, and he will become——" May shuddered and paused.

"You have grown as superstitious as himself," said Aunt Martha. "I really give you up. All I can say is, I wonder you can sit by neglected, and see him prefer another woman."

May turned pale, and her hands knotted themselves together in a knot of pain. "I cannot say that I have seen that yet, Aunt."

There was something of agony in the young girl's voice, that smote upon Miss Martha's heart, and made her regret her impatient speeches.

"Perhaps you are right, love," she said, after a pause. "I am a peppery old woman; but your happiness is the one object of my life."

"I know it, dear Aunt; but listen, and I will tell you about my happiness. It is staked on one person; his welfare is my welfare, his affliction is my affliction; I have no business in the world except to be true to Paul Finiston. His cares, and even his wrong-going, must all be upon my shoulders. I believe it would be a great misfortune to him if he were to love Katherine Archbold, therefore I will do all in my power to prevent such a thing happening. If I saw her truer, more loving, more likely to make him good and happy than myself, I think—I think I could give him

up to her; but I do not believe he likes her, and there are other things which I dread for him more than her influence. He is not in a condition at present to meet his enemies; I must fight his battles for him until good times come. So don't be disgusted if I have got no proper pride, but try to have patience with me, and with him for my sake."

So spoke May, with a brave air; but later, when quite alone, she walked about the room, weeping silently. The cottage was quiet, but the wind moaned loudly round the cloisters, and the owls had begun to hoot in the old belfry. Her thought travelled through the dark night, along the moorland path to the highest window in the gable of the farm-house. There was Paul sitting alone and overwhelmed with strange troubles, as far removed from her as if the sea had rolled between them. Here was an hour in which Katherine could not divide them, and yet that hour was as useless to her as if it had no place in time. She longed to be a cat or a dog, that she might sit beside his foot, and look in his face, or a bird that she might peck at his window and gain admittance. Was he reckoning the miser's hoards, or thinking of Katherine? It seemed long, long since he and she had made their simple plans at this fireside, counting the world a paradise, and all danger of harm and trouble at an end. Now the night wind assured her that these days would come no more.

Faster and faster her tears came down. She despaired when she found herself weeping, thinking her courage quite gone, and flung herself against the old arm-chair in the chimney-corner, burying her face in its leathern lap. The old clock ticked in the hall by the stone angel, and its voice came into the room and grew hoarse with sympathy; the lamp burned low, and the fire glowed in red ashes; and May was tempted for once to think of her aunt's vehement wish, and to doubt whether it would not have been better for her if she had never seen Paul. She might have had placid years in this home safe from the world; have made soups for the sick, and knitted her life into warm petticoats and socks for the poor; have heard the winter howl past her in fearless content, and picked the flowers of the summers, and so travelled without a pang to her grave. Now the turmoil of despair was in her heart, and a prospect lay before her of endless uneasiness and pain. The tranquil little home could not comfort her with its shelter; the

household gods looked down and could not soothe. But it was only for one moment that this cruel doubt was harboured.

"It is well that I have known him," she said; "for I will save him if it cost me my life. When he is old, and the battle won, he will be glad to think that I lived."

She dried her tears, and thought upon Paul's case, acknowledging that the thing that she dreaded most for him was the utter loss of his mind; that the curse and its fascinations, or his horror of the same, would in the end drive him to madness. What if after all it had been only a latent insanity that had wrought through generations of the race of Finiston, making them creatures unhappy and solitary, and shunned by the rest of mankind? If so, then had Paul better fly from this place with its associations, and seek safety in another part of the world. She would send him across the seas, and never look upon his face again, if thus she could secure his perfect welfare.

Katherine at the same moment was also awake and alive, though she had retired to her room so early. The tall wax candles on her chimney stood in candlesticks adorned with crossed and reverend figures which had been taken from the chapel, having been used on the monks' altar. Her wood-fire crackled merrily, her arm-chair was drawn up beside it, and she was dressed in a long red flannel dressing-gown, with her hair unbound on her shoulders.

As Katherine sat so she amused herself with a quaint amusement. She held the carrot in her hand which had excited May's wonder in the kitchen-garden; and she had washed it and cut away its delicate green plumes, and was carving it with a penknife into the likeness of a little man. She was making a mandrake in order to keep her word to Tibbie, and she held it aloof, and laughed at it as her work progressed. She had never seen a mandrake, but then neither had Tibbie, and in pleasing the old woman she would follow her own fancy. She was by no means an artist, but contrived to throw a knowing look into the eyes of the little figure, making it as ugly as it was possible that one could make it. She pared, and picked, and notched till its aspect had become sinister enough to content the most superstitious hag in the world. When all was done she stained it a darker hue, so that the carrot might not appear.

But what did Miss Archbold want with Tibbie that she should thus humour her

whims? Katherine did not ask herself the question while she carved her ugly mannikin. A spirit such as Tibbie's deserved encouragement, that was all; and one who lived so near the miser could not but be interesting to the future bride of his nephew. Katherine wondered, as she worked, how long the old man could live. How if his seventy years should multiply until they counted a hundred? Katherine sat up long that night, with brows bent, over the fire. She was beginning to feel care, she who had never met any obstacle to her wishes which had not been easily overcome. The owls hooted in the belfry, and the winds moaned round the cloisters; and even May was fast asleep before Katherine left her chair.

CHRONICLES OF LONDON STREETS.

NEWGATE (CONCLUDED).

JOSEPH WALL, commandant of the African Corps, was lieutenant-governor of the island of Goree, in Africa, and superintendent of trade to the colony of Senegambia, in the year 1782. He was an Irishman of good family, but of a severe and unrelenting disposition, and liked neither by his officers nor men. At the revolution of the Havannah in 1762, he had fought with especial courage, and won his well-deserved promotion. As a subordinate the man would have been brave and loyal, as a superior he was merciless and tyrannical, for power intoxicates and brutalises some minds. His wife was an accomplished woman of noble birth. In July, 1782, the governor being affected by the disease proverbially so fatal to Europeans, prepared to return to England. The day before he sailed, at eleven A.M., twenty or thirty men out of the three hundred soldiers of the African Corps came up in a body to the Government House, and respectfully requested that before the paymaster left with the governor, they might receive money that had been stopped from their pay, for certain restrictions in food that the garrison had just before been voluntarily enduring for some months, when provisions ran short. As spokesman at the head of these petitioners was a soldier named Benjamin Armstrong, who advanced hat in hand, and paid the governor every respect. The governor, enraged at the complaint of the men, instantly ordered Armstrong and his party back to the barracks under threat of punishment.

The men obeyed and returned without noise about two P.M. A second party,

led by a soldier named Upton, without uniform or arms, also made the same perfectly just application to Ensign Dearing, the paymaster. Soon after the governor's dinner-hour, Wall ran out, beat one of the men who appeared to be drunk, and snatching a bayonet from the sentry, struck him with it, and then put both men under arrest. Thirsting for revenge on what he called "the mutinous rascals," who had dared to ask for their rights, the governor ordered the long roll to be beat, and parade called. The three hundred men, without firearms, were formed into a circle, two deep, in the midst of which stood the implacable governor, the drummers, his obsequious captain, and pliant ensigns. Immediately the cumbrous carriage of a six-pounder was dragged into the circle, and the governor called Benjamin Armstrong out of the ranks. Five or six brawny black slaves then appeared, with an interpreter to give them orders, and unfortunate Armstrong was lashed by the wrists to the rings of the gun-carriage, to receive on the spot eight hundred lashes. The rope used was not the usual whipcord tied to a wooden handle, such as the cord with which they sting garotters in Newgate at the present day, nor even the tight-twisted log-line used on board men-of-war, but a long lashing of rope nearly an inch in circumference. With brutal cruelty, Governor Wall ordered a fresh black to take the rope every twenty-five lashes, and if the stalwart slaves at all relaxed, he shouted: "Lay on, you black beasts, or I'll lay on you; cut him to the heart, cut his liver out."

When this cruel punishment was ended, poor Armstrong, with his back "as black as a new hat," walked to the hospital, saying he felt he should certainly die. Rowe, the assistant-surgeon, found the rope had bruised and not cut the flesh, and the injuries were therefore the more serious. The poor fellow sank and died five days after the governor left for England. In March, 1784, Wall, who had been arrested at Bath by order of Lord Sidney, escaped from his majesty's messengers at the Brown Bear, Reading. He then escaped to France, changed his name, and there and in Italy lived respectably and kept good company, much affecting the Irish officers in the French service, and the professors of the Scotch and Irish colleges in Paris. In 1797, Wall returned to England and lodged in Lambeth Cut, and afterwards in Upper Thornhaugh-street, Bedford-square, Tottenham Court-road, where his wife visited him. In October, 1801, Wall

wrote to Lord Pelham, then secretary of state, announcing his readiness to submit to a trial. He was tried January 22nd, 1802. The prisoner's defence was, that before Armstrong was punished an open mutiny had broken out among the Goree garrison. Armstrong had refused to march the men back till their claims were allowed, and had said he should not leave for England. A prisoner had been released, the soldiers had threatened to break open the stores, and a sentry had held a bayonet to his (Wall's) breast. He denied that he had ever blown men from cannon as had been reported. The prisoner was found guilty, and sentence of death passed. He seemed deeply affected by the sentence, but only requested the court to give him a little time to prepare for death. After two respites, the miserable man was hung on the 28th of January. The night before the execution, the prisoner's wife, the Honourable Mrs. Wall, begged leave of Kirby, the jailer, to stay with her husband from nine to eleven, expecting a reprieve. They parted in tears, the miserable culprit saying he could submit to his fate with Christian fortitude. About one A.M., Wall, who did not sleep, inquired particularly at what time the scaffold would be brought out of the press-yard, and if it would make a great noise. The attendant, unwilling to hinder him from sleep, pretended ignorance. The poor wretch fell asleep between four and five o'clock, and did not hear the noise of the scaffold being dragged out to the debtors' door, though it shook the whole prison. But about twenty minutes after he awoke with a start, as a mail-coach passed and the horn blew cheerily, and said to the turnkey guarding him, "Is not that the fatal scaffold?" He did not fall asleep again after this, but asked many minute questions about the execution, particularly as to whether, being a tall man, he could not avoid the jerk when the scaffold fell, although, as he said, he presumed the jerk was intended to dislocate the sufferer's neck, and so put him the sooner out of pain. His voice preserved its usual strength and tone, and he spoke of his approaching death with the calmness and courage of an old soldier. At half-past six he asked an attendant whether the noise he heard was not the erecting of the scaffold. He was humanely answered in the negative. Wall put on that eventful morning a mixed-coloured loose coat with a black collar, a swan's-down waistcoat, blue pantaloons, and white silk stockings. Doctor Ford, the ordinary, soon afterwards

entered the cell, and the prisoner joined him devoutly in prayer.

In that curious and amusing work, *A Book for a Rainy Day*, Mr. J. T. Smith, formerly Keeper of the Print Room in the British Museum, says: "Solomon, a pencil-dealer, assured me that he could procure me a sight of the governor, if I would only accompany him in the evening to Hatton-garden, and smoke a pipe with Doctor Ford, the ordinary of Newgate, with whom he said he was particularly intimate. Away we trudged; and upon entering the club-room of a public-house, we found the said doctor most pompously seated in a superb masonic chair, under a stately crimson canopy, placed between the windows. The room was clouded with smoke whiffed to the ceiling, which gave me a better idea of what I had heard of the Black Hole of Calcutta than any place I had seen. There were present at least a hundred associates of every denomination; of this number my Jew, being a favoured man, was admitted to a whispering audience with the doctor, which soon produced my introduction to him."

Sunrise, the next morning, found Mr. Smith waiting by appointment for his new friend, Doctor Ford, at Newgate; and this is how he describes the end of Governor Wall:

"As we crossed the press-yard a cock crew; and the solitary clanking of a restless chain was dreadfully horrible. The prisoners had not risen. Upon our entering a cold stone room, a most sickly stench of green twigs, with which an old round-shouldered, goggle-eyed man was endeavouring to kindle a fire, annoyed me almost so much as the canaster fumigation of the doctor's Hatton-garden friends.

"The prisoner entered. He was death's counterfeit, tall, shrivelled, and pale; and his soul shot so piercingly through the port-holes of his head, that the first glance of him nearly terrified me. I said in my heart, putting my pencil in my pocket, God forbid that I should disturb thy last moments! His hands were clasped, and he was truly penitent. After the yeoman had requested him to stand up, he 'pinioned him,' as the Newgate phrase is, and tied the cord with so little feeling, that the governor, who had not given the wretch the accustomed fee, observed, 'You have tied me very tight,' upon which Doctor Ford ordered him to slacken the cord, which he did, but not without muttering. 'Thank you, sir,' said the governor to the doctor, 'it is of little moment.' He then observed to the attendant, who had brought in an

immense iron shovel full of coals to throw on the fire, 'Ay, in one hour that will be a blazing fire;' then, turning to the doctor, questioned him, 'Do tell me, sir, I am informed I shall go down with great force, is that so?' After the construction and action of the machine had been explained, the doctor questioned the governor as to what kind of men he had at Goree; 'Sir,' he answered, 'they sent me the very riff-raff.' The poor soul then joined the doctor in prayer; and never did I witness more contrition at any condemned sermon than he then evinced."

Directly the execution was over, Mr. Smith left Newgate, where the hangman's yeoman was selling the rope that had hung Governor Wall for a shilling an inch, while in Newgate-street a starved old man was selling another identical rope at the ridiculously low price of only sixpence an inch, and at the north-east corner of Warwick-lane, a woman known as Rosy Emma, reputed wife of the hangman's man, was selling a third identical noose to the Epping buttermen, who had come that morning to Newgate Market.

Mr. Steele, a lavender merchant, who lived at No. 15, Catherine-street, Strand, left town for Feltham, near Hounslow, where he had a small house and a nursery-garden, on the afternoon of Friday the 5th of November, 1802. Having seen to his gardens and stock and paid his workmen, he left his nursery the next day, Saturday, about seven in the evening. He wore at the time a light green coat, striped waistcoat, half-boots, and a round hat. Mr. Steele, not returning to London the next day, Mr. Meyer, his brother-in-law, became alarmed, and set out for Feltham, but Mr. Steele was not there. Mr. Meyer's alarm increasing, he went to the barracks at Hounslow to procure assistance, and a vigorous search was then instituted. The soldiers scouring the heath soon came on traces of the man who, it was began to be feared, had been murdered by foot-pads. His drab great-coat was found inside some flags in a gravel-pit about ten or fifteen yards from the road going from Hounslow to Staines. Soon after the soldiers discovered the body of the murdered lavender merchant on the opposite side of the road, about two hundred yards from the path. It lay in a ditch by a clump of trees, and a portion of the bank had been pulled down, or had fallen upon it. A buckled strap was drawn tight round the neck of the

corpse, which was stained with blood and dirt. There was the mark of a crushing bludgeon blow on the back of the head, and a large bruise on the right arm. The hat and shoes were gone, and the flap of the coat was spread over the face. Mr. Steele's shoes were found about fifty yards from the body. The cruel murder excited great horror at the time, and the coachmen at night, by glimpses of the moon, would point out to pale and hushed passengers the exact spot where the body was found, and the third clump of trees, near the old gravel-pit, where the searchers had picked up an old hat supposed to have belonged to one of the murderers. The story was discussed, no doubt, often enough in Catherine-street, where timid eyes would turn towards the shop with the lavender-water in the window, as if the ghost of Mr. Steele might at any moment emerge from it and start again on the road to Hounslow.

The murder had been almost forgotten, when one day in the autumn of 1807, Benjamin Hanfield, a convict in a ship then lying at Portsmouth, confessed that he had helped in the crime, and could disclose the names of the two men who really killed Mr. Steele. Holloway and Haggerty, the two men pointed out by Hanfield, were at once arrested. Haggerty was a marine on board the Shannon frigate, then lying at Deal. When taken before the port admiral and asked where he had been four years ago, his countenance fell, and he would have fallen backwards had not Vickery, the police officer, caught him, sat him down, and given him some water. Holloway was found in Clerkenwell Prison, suffering for some offence for which he had been convicted. When taken by Vickery to John-street, Bedford-row, and the warrant read, he said, "I am innocent! Oh, dear! I know nothing about it. I will down on my knees to you and the justice if you will let me go."

Hanfield's version of the story was this. He had known Haggerty and Holloway, and been much with them for six or seven years. They generally met at the Turk's Head in Dyot-street, the Black Horse in Dyot-street, or the Black Dog at the corner of Belton-street. In the beginning of November, 1802, Holloway came to Hanfield at the Turk's Head, and asked him if he had any objection to being in a good thing. It was to be a "low toby" (foot-pad robbery). Hanfield consented, and it was arranged for the Saturday following. On that day, Hanfield, Haggerty, and

Holloway met. Holloway had found out a gentleman to "sarve" (rob) on Hounslow Heath. They sat drinking some time, and then started for Hounslow, and at Turnham Green they stayed again to refresh themselves, and at the Bell at Hounslow again drank. At half-past four they left the Bell, and proceeded over the heath till they reached the eleventh mile-stone towards Belfont. They were rather too soon, so they struck out over the heath to a clump of trees. It was dark when they got there, but by the time they had waited an hour the moon rose, and they again sallied out.

As they came out from the trees, Holloway said he thought he heard a foot-step, and they went along the road till they thought they could descry the figure of a man coming along the road towards Hounslow. This man was Mr. Steele. On their stopping him and demanding his money, the lavender merchant at once consented to give it up without showing fight, and begged them not to hurt him. On his declaring he carried no pocket-book, Holloway knocked him down, and declared if he spoke he would knock out his brains. Hanfield took hold of Mr. Steele's legs. Haggerty then searched him, and on his struggling to get across the road, as a night coach approached, Holloway said, "I'll silence the beggar," and killed him with two dreadful blows of his blackthorn bludgeon. Hanfield then left them in terror, but was rejoined by them in a public-house at Hounslow. Holloway was then wearing the murdered man's hat. But on the Monday following, to avoid detection, he filled the hat with stones, and flung it into the Thames from Westminster Bridge. This was Hanfield's story, but the transported convict, who had turned king's evidence, was by no means to be implicitly believed.

From the beginning that shrewd and energetic man, Mr. James Harmer (afterwards Alderman Harmer), the attorney for Holloway and Haggerty, had a strong conviction that the two men were innocent. Hanfield it was proved had been a hackney-coachman and a thief, and had deserted from no fewer than five different regiments. Moreover, he had been once quartered at Hounslow. He had before escaped transportation by turning informer. Mr. Harmer also brought forward the sworn deposition of a fellow-prisoner of Hanfield's at the House of Correction, who proved that Hanfield had said, the day before the execution of the two men, that they could not be inno-

cent, for if they had not done this they had done other things as bad, that the hulks were dreadful, and that rather than be seven years in the hulks he would hang as many men as were killed at the battle of Copenhagen. Hanfield was peculiarly brutal and ferocious in prison. There were endless discrepancies in his evidence, and after all the two men were chiefly convicted by means of a conversation overheard by an officer, when they were in adjoining cells in Worship-street, when they confessed a previous knowledge of each other. This cruel stratagem seems more worthy of Venice in the Middle Ages than of England in 1807, and after all it only proved that they had met before. To our mind the innocence of the two men is unquestionable, and the wretch Hanfield was probably the only murderer.

To the last the two men pathetically asserted their innocence. Upon the entrance of the sheriffs, Haggerty came out into the press-yard, and had his fetters struck off. He appeared deeply depressed, but uttered not a word, and returned into what is called the Long Room to be pinioned. Holloway was pinioned before his irons were removed. He again returned into the Long Room, and a few minutes after said he wished to speak to the gentlemen. At this time several noblemen, the lord mayor, Alderman Flower, and many gentlemen, besides the sheriffs and under-sheriffs, were assembled in the yard.

A circle was formed, and, on his entering it, he began on his right, bowing slowly and reverently, until he had completed the circle; he then stood erect in the centre, and in an audible voice said, "Gentlemen, I die innocent; I know nothing of this here affair that I am going to suffer for." He then dropped down upon his knees, and with his hands, as in the posture of prayer, said, "I am innocent, by God!" He then arose, and with great composure proceeded to the scaffold.

The final catastrophe was terrible indeed. The crowd which assembled to witness the execution was nearly forty thousand. The pressure of the crowd was such, that before the prisoners appeared, some women who could be no longer supported by the men, were suffered to fall, and were trampled to death. This was also the case with several men and boys. In all parts there were continued cries of "Murder! murder!" particularly from the female part of the spectators and children, some of whom were seen expiring without the

possibility of obtaining the least assistance, every one being employed in endeavouring to preserve his own life. The most affecting scene of distress was seen at the end of Green Arbour-court, nearly opposite the debtors' door. The terrible occurrence which took place near this spot was attributed to the circumstance of two piemen attending there, and one of them having his basket overthrown, which stood upon a sort of stool with four legs; some of the mob, not being aware of what had happened, and at the same time severely pressed, fell over the basket and the man at the very moment he was picking it up, together with its contents. Those who once fell were never more suffered to rise, such was the violence of the mob. At this fatal place a man of the name of Herrington was thrown down, who had in his hand his youngest son, a fine boy about twelve years of age. The youth was soon trampled to death; the father recovered, though much bruised, and was amongst the wounded in St. Bartholomew's Hospital. A woman who was so imprudent as to take with her a child at the breast, was one of the number killed; whilst in the act of falling, she forced the child into the arms of the man nearest to her, requesting him, for God's sake, to save its life; the man finding it required all his exertion to preserve himself, threw the infant from him, but it was fortunately caught at a distance by another man, who, finding it difficult to insure its safety or his own, got rid of it in a similar way. The child was again caught by a person who contrived to struggle with it to a cart, under which he deposited it until the danger was over, and the mob had dispersed. In other parts the pressure was so great, that a horrible scene of confusion ensued, and seven persons lost their lives by suffocation alone. It was shocking to behold a large body of the crowd, in a convulsive struggle for life, fighting with the most savage fury with each other; the consequence was that the weakest, particularly the women, fell a sacrifice. A cart, which was overloaded with spectators, broke down, and some of the persons, falling from the vehicle, were trampled under foot, and never recovered. During the hour the malefactors hung, little assistance could be afforded to the unhappy sufferers; but after the bodies were cut down, and the gallows removed to the Old Bailey yard, the marshals and constables cleared the street where the catastrophe occurred, and shock-

ing to relate, there lay near one hundred persons dead, or in a state of insensibility, strewed round the street.

In an interesting account of a visit to various prisons in 1818, written by that excellent philanthropist, Joseph John Gurney, in 1819, that writer appends some sensible and practical remarks made on prison discipline by himself and his noble sister, Mrs. Fry, the very type of Christian charity. He speaks warmly of the good effected by the Ladies' Prison Visiting Association, which commenced its labours among the female prisoners of Newgate in April, 1817. Those excellent people, the Quakers, always alive to works of charity, originated the movement, and were first, here and in America, to revive a remembrance of the almost forgotten fact that the object of law and justice is not so much to punish as to reform the criminal. Mere cruelty transforms him into a wild beast, kindness and religion restore him to humanity, bring him back from the pariah state, and often restore him to civilisation. The feeling that good men still care for him, and do not look upon him as utterly lost, softens his heart, and habits of order, sobriety, and industry, recreate him, as it were, and often recal him to humanity. The cold-blooded murderer alone the law considers as hopeless, irreclaimable, and dangerous, and so dismisses him from life in terrible but just retaliation for the life he has taken: all other criminals it should endeavour to warn, and if possible to reclaim. Poverty has perhaps led him to crime, and his habits of crime may have arisen merely from never having heard of or seen virtue. Most young prisoners are reclaimable; most women whom vice (the result of their seducer's crime) has turned into thieves or drunkards, are reclaimable if a better mode of life is opened to them. On these great principles Mrs. Fry acted, and with a success that seems the result of Heaven's special blessing. At that time the female prisoners in Newgate were sunk into an apparently hopeless state of idleness, abandoned and shameless vice, riot, and drunkenness. They were the dregs of the dregs of London, the scum of the scum, blasphemous, filthy, ignorant of the commonest decencies and duties of life. Frequent communication was allowed them, through an iron grating, with visitors of both sexes, many of such visitors as vile, degraded, and desperate as themselves.

There was not even an attempt at general inspection; the only rough separation of classes and degrees of guilt was that of the tried from the untried. They slept promiscuously in large companies. The hardening and be basing executions were terribly frequent, and fresh prisoners were perpetually pouring in.

The good effected by the lady visitors was almost instantaneous. The most depraved and abandoned prisoners, with that hard-earned knowledge of the world they had earned by blood and tears, felt at once how pure and unselfish these ladies were. The most debased and cynical could discover only one motive for the conduct of those who brought the cup of cold water in His name. The stormiest heart was found still able to throb at a kind word, a pitying look, an act of kindness. The lowest of the criminals soon began to conform to the new standard; the scene changed; the worst women became quiet and gentle, orderly and industrious, neater and cleaner, their very countenances improved and softened. They would sit for hours with the ladies who visited Newgate, and behave with perfect decorum. Many learned to read; others became dexterous at knitting and needlework, all, by some means or another, were busily employed. Two of the committee, if possible, together, visited the prison daily, and became acquainted with the cases of individual prisoners. Women who had entered Newgate in rags or half naked, were decently clad, either by aid of their own earnings or at the expense of the association. The vilest grew more self-respecting. The prisoners' patchworks, spinning, and knitting were sold for them, and if possible part of their earnings set by to accumulate for their benefit when they returned to the world. Schools were started for the children and for the grown-up women. The governesses were chosen from the more intelligent, and steady, and persevering of the prisoners. A capital system of supervision was also established: Over every twelve or thirteen women a matron was placed, who was answerable for their work, and kept an account of their conduct. A ward woman attended to the cleanliness of the wards, a yard woman maintained good order in the yards, and the sick-room was ruled by a nurse and an assistant. These officers were selected from the most orderly and respectable of the prisoners, and they received extra emolument. These situations were great

incitements to good conduct. The female prisoners assembled every morning in the committee room to hear the Bible, and sometimes a prayer, read by the matron or one of the visitors. The women on being dismissed, returned to their several employments, says Mr. Gurney, with uniform order and quietness.

Who can tell how far this extraordinary change in the female prisoners of Newgate was real? The outward result there was no disputing. The women became especially honest among themselves. In no less than one hundred thousand manufactured articles of work not one was stolen. Even a still more satisfactory proof of the good effected was the great decrease in the number of recommitments, only four prisoners having been reconvicted from 1817 to 1819; these criminals on their return evincing a strong sense of uneasiness and shame. Many of the poor women who left were kept under supervision by members of the committee, and were found to preserve a good character, obtaining places as servants, or earning an honest livelihood at home. Several of the women on their discharge received small loans to help them forward, and these loans they repaid by most punctual weekly instalments. At the end of 1817 a return was made, at the request of the benevolent T. F. Buxton, of the recommitments on the "male side" of Newgate. It then appeared that, out of two hundred and three men, forty-seven of those convicted had been confined there before within the two preceding years. The returns on the female side since the Ladies' Association civilised that part of the prison, are not more, as compared with the male side, than as four are to forty-seven. Before the angels of mercy came in Quaker garb, the returns on the female side used to be, compared with those of the male side, as three are to five. And all these great results are the effect of a little kindness, and a little Christian charity.

DROWNED.

A MAIDEN on a summer eve
Stood watching at the place of tryst,
For him who came not; till at last
Uprose from earth, the night's chill mist;
And wistfully she fixed her eyes
Upon the pale stars in the skies.

The lindens shivered in the breeze,
The cold East breeze, though it was June,
As sometimes an Æolian harp,
Sounds one false concord out of tune;
And o'er her heart, there crept a chill,
A prescience of coming ill.

The white owl hooted his refrain,
Weird prophet, from the ivied tower;
The jackdaw, from the belfry loft,
Echoed the striking of the hour.
Ten strokes! And with a tear-stained face,
Homeward her way she 'gan to trace.

Drowned! he was drowned that afternoon,
Drowned in the loveliest of spots,
Upon the silver breast of Thames,
Amid the blue forget-me-nots.
For her, the maiden, all but wife,
Went out, that eve, the star of life!

OUR HALL.

WE are proud of our Hall, looking upon it as one of the features of London, and a place of favourite resort for visitors from the provinces. It is not a vestry-hall, though from time to time there are delivered in it speeches as full of sound and fury, and as significant of nothing, as are bawled forth in any parochial parliament. It is not, strictly speaking, according to the common acceptation of the term, a music-hall, though in it the best works of the greatest masters are constantly performed by the most finished executants. It is not a floral-hall, though in it we have seen a splendid display of fruit and flowers, nor a dining-hall, though the lively turtle, who gambol in its lower windows, are sacrificed and eaten within, nor a discussion-hall, nor a temperance-hall, nor a medical-hall, which seems to be modern English for a chemist's shop. Its uses are various. When Miss Norah O'Flaherty gives her annual concert on St. Patrick's Day—on which occasion such numbers of her gallant countrymen rally round her to cheer the national airs strung together in the Och Hubbaboo Quadrille—she hires our Hall for the purpose. When the Reverend Thrashem Wigg pours out the vials of his wrath on the gaily-dressed lady who dwells in the city erected on seven hills, nothing smaller than our Hall can contain the ladies and gentlemen who flock in from Clapham, to glory in the denunciation of the lady in question, and of the old gentleman in the skull cap, who is her aider and abettor. Readers, entertainers, concert givers, people who go about with giants and dwarfs, and who used to be called showmen, but who are now euphuistically styled "entrepreneurs," promoters of fancy fairs, and horticultural shows, billiard champions, and everybody who has anything to exhibit or expound, and who require a handsome, large, and fashionably situated location—all come to our Hall, which was expressly built to suit their wants. For our Hall is the St.

James's Hall, in Piccadilly, and winter and summer, spring and autumn, day and night, there is something going on there.

Let us take the winter season first. To the average London man, who takes his pleasures with a proper amount of tranquillity, there is perhaps no period of the year more thoroughly enjoyable than that between Christmas and Easter. Then the vigour gained during his autumnal holiday is still fresh within him; he has been for a long time separated from his acquaintances, and even the dullest of them will probably have stolen some tolerably new idea; he has been snipe-shooting in Ireland, or hunting in the shires, or travelling abroad in the wildest and most primitive parts available, and he returns to the charms of civilisation with increased appreciation and infinite gusto. Then comes the cosey dinner, either at the club or with a small, well-selected party (you can never get just the people you want during the season), with the fire-light and the candle-light gleaming off plate and glass, throwing a pleasant glow on surrounding pictures and furniture, and shedding everywhere an air of comfort, infinitely superior to all the elegance of flower and fruit decoration to be met with later on. Then is the time to nestle in the comfortable stall or the snug private box. Then is the time when certain columns of the newspapers teem with advertisements, announcing the return to England of some of the most distinguished members of the musical profession, and when the professionals themselves can be heard at their freshest and their best, before they are hand-numbed, brain-weary, or voice-worn by the exigencies of the London season.

Five minutes to eight o'clock on a damp, misty, muggy, January night. The Regent-street entrance to St. James's Hall blocked with vehicles, cabs for the most part, but with a good sprinkling of private carriages; very few rakish broughams, but the family landau, with the footman, whose great-coat never fits him; the roomy clarence, set off by the silver-hat-banded page-boy; and the common domestic fly, which seems to have long since given up pretending to be a private vehicle, are here in every variety. Stand aside while Mrs. Pocklington Snoddy and the two Miss Snodbys, who have been for the last three quarters of an hour boxed up in their carriage on their way from Clapham Park, slither over the greasy pavement, and are received at the door by

young Mr. Gossett, of Wood-street, E.C., who has been dining at his club, the Junior Patagonian, and faultlessly attired, lavender gloved and flower button-holed, is waiting to escort the ladies up the stairs. Room now if you please for little Lady Quibbs, pleasantest, brightest, kindest of women. If you know anything of the musical world, and are anything like a decent age, you will recollect Lady Quibbs when she was Miss Lavrock, long before she married Sir Parker Quibbs, K.C.B., when she and her sister used to sing at public dinners and the nobility's concerts, when they gave lessons in Bulstrode-street, Manchester-square, when Mrs. Von Bomm used regularly to lend them her big drawing-rooms in Harley-street for their annual concert, and when they were worked hard and struggled bravely, and out of their little savings had always a guinea to spare for any miserable member of "the profession." Lucy Lavrock is dead now, and Martha is Lady Quibbs, rich and happy, though childless; she now works as hard at doing good as she used to do in teaching singing, is the most modest, unassuming, dearest little Lady Bountiful that ever lived, and is still so devoted to music that you may be sure of finding her wherever anything good is to be heard. Let us mingle with the crowd which, steadily increasing in bulk, has been ever passing onwards while we have been waiting here, and which is composed of ladies and gentlemen, most of whom are in evening dress; let us go with them up the stairs and take our chance of the amusement in store for us. It may be that we shall see those sable minstrels, whose curiously and constantly repeated boast it is that they have never played out of London. We may have the luck to behold Mr. Farquhar Flote's London Life, in which that distinguished entertainer dives under the table every five minutes, and swims to the surface again in quite a different character; or to hear Mr. Stentor read a selection from the Ballads of British Bagmen. No, a different fate is ours; when we arrive at the top of the staircase we follow on into the great hall, and, from a programme which is placed in our hands, we learn that one of the series of instrumental and vocal performances, known as the Monday Popular Concerts, is about to commence.

As, from the determined aspect of the people in the immediate neighbourhood of our stalls, we should probably be instantly put to death if we ventured to move, speak,

or cough when the programme was once entered upon, we will take advantage of the few moments left us to look around. The hall seems full in every part. In the stalls the people are rustling and nodding, and getting rid of any superfluous excitement before settling down into that severe decorum which classical music always demands; in the galleries, where morning dress is for the most part the rule, they are taking off coats and cloaks, and seeing how the music-books with which many of the occupants are provided can be wielded with the smallest amount of inconvenience, while from immediately behind the grand piano on the platform to the boundary wall, the orchestra is black with human beings ranged in semicircles above each other, tier after tier.

Any of one's acquaintances in the stalls? Several of course. The small wiry gentleman with the thin beardless cheeks, the bright sunken eye, the close-cropped hair, is Mr. Justice Judex, now the dignified and impartial judge, erst the bold and brilliant advocate, the lucid reasoner, the silver-tongued orator, the wary tactician in debate. Throughout his life he has been foremost in everything; in the hunting-field and the boudoir he has been as much at home as on the bench; but music is the one passion of his life to which he has been most constant. During the whole of the day just past he has been listening to interminable arguments, wearying in themselves, yet requiring the keenest attention, the most evenly-balanced intellect; now, two minutes after the first notes of the opening quintet strike upon his ear, you will see him leaning back in his chair, his chin resting on his hand, his whole soul rapt, enchanted, beatified. What to him are sittings in banco and rules nisi? What to him Themis in comparison with Euterpe? What to him the double-handed sword of justice in comparison with the horsehair bow with which M. Piatti is extracting such ravishing sounds? Through the mind of that man, softened and attuned by Mozart's wondrous melodies, what reminiscences may float! Thoughts of the times ere he made his first coup, when he was young and briefless, and sat in his shabby chambers awaiting the attorneys who would not come; perhaps even at days earlier than that—of the cathedral city on the bright and shining river where his boyhood was passed, and where he would sit much as he sits now, fascinated and entranced by the playing of the organist or singing of the anthem.

The tall man sitting next to him is Mr. Frank Farrance, of the Home Office, who has been dining with Mr. Justice Judex, and who, while liking good dinners, and proud to be taken notice of by his companion, does not care much for music, and occupies himself in making eyes at the governess in Mr. Hoddinott's family, who are seated close by. Great patrons of music are the Hoddinotts: the eldest daughter, Jemima, having, under the pseudonym of Aimée, composed several ballads, and the youngest son, with the long hair and spectacles, being shrewdly suspected of being the Wolfgang, who withers the musical world in the columns of the Highbury Warder. And the Hebraic element is omnipresent; the De Lyneys, of Tavistock-square, and the Van Sheens, of Woburn-place, fill up an entire row, and sit, the males some curly and some bald, the females some flat-banded, some frizzed, some ringleted, but all bland, shiny, and oleginous, beating time and grunting deeply. Little Mr. Moss, the lawyer from Thavies Inn, is there too, and with him Mr. Moysey, the diamond merchant from Amsterdam. As a rule, the female denizens of the stalls are not pretty, the male occupants of the fauteuils are not young—but all are intensely interested in what is going on, and join together in silencing any one who may dare to speak with a deep and prolonged hish-h-h. The same preoccupation and interest are noticeable in the galleries, where the people are much of the ordinary stamp of theatrical audiences, many of those amongst them who are supposed to be in evening dress wearing the skimpy little red opera-cloaks and the feeble artificial flower so much in vogue with the frequenters of the dress-circle when the pieces played are not attractive, but it is in the audience seated in the orchestra that the spectator will find his chief cause for speculation and wonderment.

There is no attempt at evening dress here; the muddy boots of most of the men, the draggled dresses of many of the women, show that they have walked hither in their work-a-day clothes, probably straight from their labours, to this their greatest recreation. A shilling is the sum which each has paid for admission, and the most casual observation would show that in many cases it was certainly as much as could be afforded. Here are pale, worn-looking women, governesses by the day, the half-day, the hour, who leave their mean lodgings in the early

morning and tramp about from house to house, bearing neglect, insolence, contumely—the rage of spoiled children, the insults of vulgar parents, the contempt of pampered servants—who hammer away from hour to hour at the rudiments of French and English, who strike the scarcely responsive notes of the dull piano with listless finger, and who, from year's end to year's end, are running up and down the scales, practising the eternal Czerny's exercises, and the immortal "A vous dirai-je." In this series of concerts, and one or two others equally good and equally cheap, lies the sole recreation in which these good people indulge. There they come, arriving at the same time, sitting, as I am told, nearly always in the same places, following note by note all that is played or sung in the music-books which they have brought with them; enrapt during the performance, enthusiastic at its close. The male denizens of the orchestra are, for the most part, of the same rank in life: small clerks and shopmen, who, with other tastes, would be found in the music-hall or in the billiard-saloon, but who, curiously enough, seem to prefer the dreamy Glück to the Jolly Bash, the sonata in A major to the spot stroke. Here and there are traces of a foreign element among them, but the majority are poor, simple, hard-working English people. The remainder of the audience in the orchestra is recruited from the ranks of the enthusiasts. Real "fanatici per la musica" they would rather pay stall price for a seat in the orchestra, than a shilling for the best stall in the hall. They can hear, it is true, in the body of the hall. But in the orchestra they can also see. They can watch Herr Joachim's nimble bow, they can greedily survey the fingering of Madame Arabella Goddard, and of Mr. Charles Hallé, and if any of these incomparable artists were to trip or stumble (though, to be sure, the idea is preposterous) the orchestra enthusiasts would be the first to note and to shudder at the awful fact.

As you enter, either from Piccadilly or Regent-street (for our Hall has two approaches, though the first-named can scarcely be looked upon as worthy of it), you will have noticed among the mural advertisements a certain number of print portraits of gentlemen attired in faultless evening costume, with great development of shirt-cuff and watch-chain. These gentlemen, who are also remarkable for

their heads of hair, and for their very thick moustaches, are the principals in the band of nigger minstrels, which has been so long and so deservedly popular. There is a stern, truculent, punch-your-head kind of expression in the portraits, which you can scarcely reconcile with the tender warbling of "Dey've laid her 'neath de gooseberry-bush," or the more pointed satire of "Wake up, ole Sal." But it is, perhaps, the burnt cork which softens and refines all. Anyhow, it is certain that these minstrels, who, clever singers though they be, would certainly not have proved attractive for so long had they preserved their natural appearance, have been stationary at our Hall for years, and seldom or never sing to any but a full room. This is probably due to the fact that they appeal to that large class of the public which, while musically uneducated, takes delight in soft and simple melodies; that the tenor voices are exceptionally pure and sweet, and that the harmony of the chorus is excellent. It is to be regretted that the words of the ballads are very much inferior to the music, and that the endeavour to give local colour destroys the sentiment which is evidently intended. For instance, when one hears a singer utter something like the following:

Dey've laid her 'neath de gooseberry-bush,
By de ole plantation's side,
De 'possum and de jackal sing
A requiem o'er my bride;
De alligator swims around,
De walrus is at play,
But my love will nebbber more be found,
I've lost my charming May.

CHORUS—Lost! lost! my May, my charming, charming May, &c.

it is impossible to be much affected, however sympathetic may be the voice and manner. As for the comic songs, they are about as ghastly as the usual run of such ditties, but the conversations between Mr. Bones and his chief are by no means unamusing, more especially when they climax, after an immense amount of yuck-yucking and buffoonery, in the chief's suddenly dignified rebuke, "Come, sir, no more of this—Gentle Annie!"

Also in the winter, in our Hall, take place the great billiard-matches, at which both money and reputation are at stake, and which are attended by all the principal supporters of this now extraordinarily popular game. The matches are held sometimes in the large hall, but when that is occupied, in a large square apartment situate in a remote corner of this apparently inexhaustible building of ours. Tiers of seats surround

the apartment for the spectators, while in the centre of the room is a splendid billiard-table, on either side of which stand Crook and Dobbin, the antagonists, both young men, remarkably well got up, in evening dress, and with their coats off, looking like two gentlemen in a club dressing-room about to wash their hands previous to dinner. The audience is an assemblage of heterogeneous particles; men from the "Rag," and other military clubs, men who once belonged to the "Rag," but who have now faded away into provincial towns, where they loaf their lives away in the billiard-rooms attached to the hotels, and try to add to their narrow incomes by pool practice. Keen-eyed men these, watching every stroke with intense interest, intent on "picking up wrinkles," and savagely objurgant against noise and interruption of the play. Men about town, calm, cool, and insouciant, and lads from the universities successfully copying their dress, and unsuccessfully aping their manners; hunting-men from the shires, up in town on account of the frost, frequenters of Tattersall's, and the usual selvaige and fringe of openly-professed discounters, and attorneys lending money in secret, which always attends the meetings of any portion of the sporting world. Dotted here and there amidst this motley crew are one or two characters who, if they were recognised, would be thought oddly out of place; an amateur artist of renown, a contributor of dreamy philosophical articles to a weighty periodical, a hard-headed civil engineer, who is so much in demand one would have thought every minute of his time had been absorbed by his profession; there they are, apparently as intent upon the game as the reporter of the Sporting Press, who makes a memorandum of every telling stroke in his note-book. There is plenty of drinking and smoking, but the game is carried on with perfect decorum, and almost in silence. Loud betting was at one time the practice, but it interfered with the comfort of the players, and was put a stop to; now, occasionally, an enthusiastic gentleman will intimate his desire to back his opinion by holding up his five or ten fingers to a friend on the opposite side of the room, who responds with promptitude, and the bet is booked. What newspaper reporters of a police case indicate by "sensation," is expressed after a failure which should have been a success by a prolonged murmur of "a-a-ah," and a specially clever stroke is loudly applauded.

This happened notably on the last occasion of our visit, when Crook, getting the two balls into a corner immediately hovering over the pocket, made eleven cannons in the space of a minute, without pocketing one, being a portion of a break of one hundred and sixteen, played with the most consummate tact and skill. Else, the game proceeds in silence, nothing being heard but the monotonous cry of the marker noting its progress.

In the summer, the classical concerts and the sable minstrels go on just the same, supplemented by the fancy fairs, the public meetings, the flower shows, and the other exhibitions, so that our Hall is the constant centre of attraction. So it ought to be, for it was a costly experiment, costing forty-three thousand pounds to build and furnish. Its architect was Mr. Owen Jones, whose special powers of internal decoration were never more effectively displayed, and it was opened on March the 25th, 1858, in the presence of the late Prince Consort. Long may it prosper!

TWO RUSSIAN JESTERS.

JOKES, like bills, require names to back them; and it will be found that, in every nation, some one personage, real or mythical, is selected as the lay-figure upon which all popular jests are by common consent displayed. The English have their Joe Miller, the Germans their Schiltbürger and their Tyll Eulenspiegel, the Americans their Colonel Crockett, the Orientals their Nasireddin el Khejah; and, in the same way, the chosen godfathers of Russian humour are Balákireff, the jester, and Marshal Suvóroff. The latter name has long since passed into history; but the former requires some introduction to non-Russian readers. Popular traditions unite in representing Balákireff as the constant attendant of Peter the Great, who figures largely in all the stories attached to the name of his buffoon. Many of these stories are probably the fabrication of a later age; but a fair proportion of them bear marks of authenticity, and, as fair specimens of national humour, are worth quoting.

On one occasion Balákireff begged permission of his imperial master to attach himself to the guard stationed at the palace, and Peter, for the sake of the joke, consented—warning him at the same time that any officer of the guard who happened to lose his sword, or to be absent from his post when summoned, was punished with

death. The newly-made officer promised to do his best; but the temptation of some good wine sent to his quarters that evening by the czar, “to moisten his commission,” proved too strong for him; and he partook so freely as to become completely “screwed.” While he was sleeping off his debauch, Peter stole softly into the room, and carried off his sword. Balákireff, missing it on awaking, and frightened out of his wits at the probable consequences, could devise no better remedy than to replace the weapon with his own professional sword of lath, the hilt and trappings of which were exactly similar to those of the guardsmen. Thus equipped, he appeared on parade the next morning, confident in the assurance of remaining undetected, if not forced to draw his weapon. But Peter, who had doubtless foreseen this contingency, instantly began storming at one of the men for his untidy appearance, and at length faced round upon Balákireff with the stern order, “Captain Balákireff, draw your sword and cut that sloven down!”

The poor jester, thus brought fairly to bay, laid his hand on his hilt as if to obey, but at the same time exclaimed fervently, “Merciful Heaven! let my sword be turned into wood!”

And drawing the weapon, he exhibited in very deed a harmless lath. Even the presence of the emperor was powerless to check the roar of laughter which followed; and Balákireff was allowed to escape.

The jester’s ingenuity occasionally served him in extricating others from trouble as well as himself. A cousin of his, having fallen under the displeasure of the czar, was about to be executed; and Balákireff presented himself at court to petition for a reprieve. Peter, seeing him enter, and at once divining his errand, shouted to him, “It’s no use your coming here; I swear that I will not grant what you are going to ask!”

Quick as thought, Balákireff dropped on his knees, and exclaimed, “Peter Alexievitch, I beseech you put that scamp of a cousin of mine to death!” Peter, thus caught in his own trap, had no choice but to laugh, and send a pardon to the offender.

During one of the czar’s Livonian campaigns, a thick fog greatly obstructed the movements of the army. At length a pale watery gleam began to show itself through the mist, and two of the Russian officers fell to disputing whether this were the sun or not. Balákireff, happening to pass by at that moment, they appealed to him to

decide. "Is that light yonder the sun, brother?"

"How should I know?" answered the jester; "I've never been here before!"

At the end of the same campaign several of the officers were relating their exploits, when Balákireff stepped in among them. "I've got a story to tell, too," cried he, boastfully; "a better one than any of yours!"

"Let us hear it, then," answered the officers; and Balákireff began.

"I never liked this way of fighting, all in a crowd together, which they have now-a-days; it seems to me more manly for each to stand by himself; and therefore I always went out alone. Now it chanced that one day, while reconnoitring close to the enemy's outposts, I suddenly espied a Swedish soldier lying on the ground just in front of me! There was not a moment to lose; he might start up and give the alarm. I drew my sword, rushed upon him, and at one blow cut off his right foot!"

"You fool!" cried one of the listeners, "you should rather have cut off his head!"

"So I would," answered Balákireff, with a grin, "but somebody else had done that already!"

At times Balákireff pushed his waggeries too far, and gave serious offence to his formidable patron. On one of these occasions the enraged emperor summarily banished him from the court, bidding him "never appear on Russian soil again." The jester disappeared accordingly; but a week had hardly elapsed when Peter, standing at his window, espied his disgraced favourite coolly driving a cart past the very gates of the palace. Foreseeing some new jest, he hastened down, and asked with pretended roughness, "How dare you disobey me, when I forbade you to show yourself on Russian ground?"

"I haven't disobeyed you," answered Balákireff, coolly; "I'm not on Russian ground now!"

"Not on Russian ground?"

"No; this cart-load of earth that I'm sitting on is Swedish soil. I dug it up in Finland only the other day!"

Peter, who had doubtless begun already to regret the loss of his jester, laughed at the evasion, and restored him to favour. Some Russian writers embellished this story (a German version of which figures in the adventures of Tyll Eulenspiegel) with the addition that Peter, on hearing the excuse, answered, "If Finland be Swedish soil now, it shall be Russian before long"—a threat which he was not slow to fulfil.

The stories told of Marshal Suvóroff are of a different order, and display, better than whole pages of description, the wonderful way in which he contrived to adapt himself to the rude spirits with whom he had to deal, without losing one jot of his authority. What Napoleon was to the French army, Suvóroff was to that of Russia; now jesting with a soldier, and now rebuking a general; one day sharing a ration of black bread beside a bivouac fire, and the next speaking as an equal to princes and potentates. In fact, the two great sponsors of Russian wit form a most picturesque contrast. Balákireff has very much the character of a spaniel in a lion's cage—admiring, even, while mocking his formidable patron—behaving towards him with a half-waggish, half-affectionate familiarity—perpetually offending, and perpetually forgiven. Suvóroff comes before us as an uncrowned king, one whose authority needed no outward symbol; an autocrat of Nature's making, full of a rough, hearty familiarity, that was in no danger of breeding contempt, and surrounded by men who enjoyed the bonhomie, while they dreaded the displeasure of the little, pug-nosed, grimy man, who was in their eyes the incarnation of earthly power and grandeur.

It must be owned, however, that in his own peculiar vein of pleasantry, the old marshal more than once met with his match. One of his favourite jokes was to confuse a man by asking him unexpectedly, "How many stars are there in the sky?"

On one occasion he put this question to one of his sentries, on a bitter January night, such as only Russia can produce. The soldier, not a whit disturbed, answered coolly, "Wait a little, and I'll tell you;" and he deliberately began to count, "One, two, three," &c. In this way he went gravely on to a hundred, at which point Suvóroff, who was already half frozen, thought it high time to ride off, not, however, without inquiring the name of this ready reckoner. The next day the latter found himself promoted, and the story (which Suvóroff told with great glee to his staff) speedily made its way through the whole army.

On another occasion one of his generals of division sent him a sergeant with despatches, at the same time recommending the bearer to Suvóroff's notice. The marshal, as usual, proceeded to test him by a series of whimsical questions; but the catechumen was equal to the occasion. "How far is it to the moon?" asked Suvóroff.

"Two of your excellency's forced marches," answered the sergeant.

"If your men began to give way in a battle, what would you do?"

"I'd tell them that just behind the enemy's line there was a waggon-load of corn-brandy."

"Supposing you were blockaded, and had no provisions left, how would you supply yourself?"

"From the enemy!"*

"How many fish are there in the sea?"

"As many as have not been caught."

And so the examination went on, till Suvoroff, finding his new acquaintance armed at all points, at length asked him as a final poser, "What is the difference between your colonel and myself?"

"The difference is this," replied the soldier, coolly; "my colonel cannot make me a captain, but your excellency has only to say the word!"

Suvoroff, struck by his shrewdness, kept his eye upon the man, and in no long time after actually gave him the specified promotion.

Suvoroff always affected the utmost brevity both in speaking and writing, the terseness of his despatches being almost unrivalled. The correspondence with Prince Potemkin, relative to the assault of Ismail, is unique in military history. Potemkin, copying the brevity of his general, wrote to him thus: "Marshal, you will take Ismail within three days, at whatever cost.—POTEMKIN." The day after the letter arrived Suvoroff carried the town by storm, with a loss of fifteen thousand men to himself, and thirty-eight thousand to the enemy—summing up the fearful tragedy in one doggerel couplet, which, literally translated, runs as follows:

"Praise to God, and praise to thee!
Ismail's ta'en, and there I be."

The anecdotes of the great marshal's eccentricities—his habit of wandering about the camp in disguise, his whim of giving the signal for assault by crowing like a cock, his astounding endurance of heat and cold, his savage disregard of personal comfort and neatness—are beyond calculation; but perhaps the most characteristic of all is his appearance in 1799 at the Austrian court, then one of the most brilliant in Europe. On being shown to the room prepared for him (a splendid apartment, filled with costly mirrors and rich furniture), this modern Diogenes said simply, "Turn out all that rubbish, and shake me

down some straw." An Austrian grandee who came to visit him was startled at these preparations, and still more so at the first sight of the marshal's "baggage," which consisted of two coarse shirts and a tattered cloak tied up in a bundle.

"Is that enough for winter?" asked the astounded visitor.

"The winter's the father of us Russians," answered Suvoroff, with a grin; "besides, you don't feel the cold when you're riding full gallop."

"But when you're tired of riding, what do you do?"

"Walk."

"And when you're tired of walking?"

"Run."

"And do you never sleep, then?" asked the petrified questioner.

"Sometimes, when I've nothing better to do," replied Suvoroff, carelessly; "and when I want to have a very luxurious nap, I take off one of my spurs."

The thunder-struck Austrian bowed and retired, doubtless considerably enlightened in his ideas of a Russian general.

It is worth while to chronicle (however out of place it may appear in a collection of jests) one more story of Suvoroff, that which tells how the grim veteran, already far on the road to the bloodiest of his campaigns, rode back for miles through the blinding storm to take one last look at his sleeping children, kissed and blessed them with passionate earnestness, and then rushed away like a whirlwind upon his mission of destruction. Such a man deserved more merciful judgment than the stinging epitaph written upon him by a wit of the nation which wrought his downfall: "A good soldier, but a bad general; a good servant, but a bad courtier; a good Russian, but a bad European."

LELGARDE'S INHERITANCE.

IN TWELVE CHAPTERS. CHAPTER XI.

So our visit to Hollyfield parsonage was a failure, and that which we paid, under Mr. Benson's auspices, to Mrs. Hatterick, at the farm, was not more successful. Though Mrs. Hatterick, a disagreeable-looking, hard woman, became courtesy itself when first she gathered from our inquiries that the boy she had slighted was somebody after all, she could give us no information; and probably a moment's reflection showed her that her treatment of him had not been of a nature which would enable her to establish any claim

* Napoleon is said to have given the same answer to his examiners at Brienne.

upon him, for she froze up again into stolid indifference, would not remember the names of any of the gentlemen lodgers to whom Mr. Benson had referred, would not make any suggestions, would not be helpful or pleasant. Her husband had died a few months before, and we found no one able to help us. So, weary and dispirited, Lelgarde confessed that there was nothing for it but to return the way we came. Never did any one mourn over losing an inheritance as she did over being compelled to keep one. Her distress was a marvel and an amusement, not only to Mr. Seymour Kennedy, whose visits, however, became few and far between, but to Mr. Graves, the family lawyer, who just at this time left London, and established himself in a little whitewashed house in the outskirts of the village of Trembleton, giving up all business, except the management of the estate, which he did not like to relinquish after so many years. By his advice, Lelgarde remained passive for the present, keeping the whole matter secret; but it was too manifest that all the zest of life had deserted her; and how gladly would I have seen the heir appear, to have my Lelgarde her old self in looks and cheerfulness, as well as in fortune. Since the mystery had been cleared up, her midnight terrors had ceased, but she lived, I was sure, in constant dread of their recurrence, for at the bottom of her heart, or rather of her fancy, there still lurked a belief that she had really received a spiritual visitation, instead of being, as I feel certain she was, merely the subject of a curious trick of memory. She avoided the room which we were wont to call Miss Hilda's; she shrank from all mention of her or her story, and once, when we passed the open door, and saw the unfinished picture, she burst into sudden tears.

"I have done my best, God knows I have!" she cried, in an agony of distress, and I could only soothe and pet her till her sobs subsided, and she was calm enough to listen to my oft-repeated arguments that what was not her fault could in no wise be imputed to her. Still I did not wonder at her depression; her position was a most painful one, and I understood the sigh with which she said:

"I shall never marry."

"You must marry somebody so rich that he will not mind giving up Athelstones," I said, trying to speak lightly; but she coloured rosy red, and answered gravely:

"No, I do not think that is at all likely to happen."

Soon after, she told me that she felt strongly her own helpless position as a woman; that though Mr. Graves professed to be making inquiries, she did not think he put any heart into it, and she knew he would rejoice if the missing heir never made his appearance.

"If I were a man," she said, "I would never rest. I would wander the world over till I found him."

In spite of Lelgarde's discontent, Mr. Graves had really done his best; he had, for months—for by this time summer was merging into autumn—advertised in the Times, and various other papers, inviting Henry Hamilton to apply to him at his office at Trembleton, and offering a reward to any one who could give well-substantiated news of him—but no one had as yet appeared.

One lovely afternoon in September I had tempted Lelgarde out for a walk. She had grown so listless now, that it was not easy to stir her up to take exercise, but on this occasion she led the way to the knoll whence we had so fine a view of the little domain. There we sat silent, and I grieved to see that slow tears began to trickle down her face as she gazed, and I noticed more than ever how pale that face was growing, and how thin the hands that were clasped upon her knee. The sight overcame all my self-control.

"My darling, my darling," I cried out suddenly, "this is killing you."

"Yes," she answered, quite quietly, and then, I suppose, the despair in my face struck her, for she put her hand in mine, and said:

"Never mind, Joany, dear; perhaps all will come right. 'When night is drearest, morn is nearest,' you know."

There was a hasty tread, a rustling in the bushes. We were near the public road, and there was nothing unusual in foot-passengers coming that way, but nevertheless Lelgarde started violently, and sprang up. The wayfarer stopped short. I had one instant's view of a tall, broad-chested figure in light-coloured garments, knapsack on shoulder, and a bronzed and bearded face, before Lelgarde's glad cry and my own eyes told me who it was—Harry Goldie—older, browner, broader—man instead of boy, but Harry Goldie still; good-humoured, gay, and pleasant to look upon, as in the olden time. I could have blessed him for the brilliant happiness which shone at once on my Lelgarde's face, and I gave a hearty hand-shake in answer to his eager grip.

"Well, this is a surprise!" was his first audible sentence. "How do you come here? I had no idea——"

"Nay, how do you come here?" returned my sister; "it is our part of the country. I hoped you were come to pay us your promised visit."

"Indeed, I had no idea that I was in your neighbourhood. I am making a sketching tour, and yesterday I found a sudden call of business would bring me here—to Trembleton—so I have been walking across country; and rather pretty country it is. Whose is that fine old place?"

I am sure Lelgarde was going to say, "It is mine," but she changed her form of speech, and said, "It is Athelstanes."

"Indeed! It is very picturesque," said Harry, and he suddenly froze up into a company tone and manner, which, I could see, pained and surprised my sister. I could see, too, that there was a perplexity in her mind. Mr. Graves had made her solemnly promise not to reveal the state of things to any living soul without his permission, and her wish to welcome her old friend hospitably was warring with her great repugnance to take upon herself the position of mistress of Athelstanes. Hospitality, however, carried the day, and she begged him to stop and rest a little while with us, but the consciousness of an *arrière-pensée* made her manner so stiff, that I was not surprised to hear Harry decline almost as stiffly. A wise woman would have left things to settle themselves, but I am not wise, I suppose, and I could not stand the fading of pleasure on my Lelgarde's sweet face, so I put in a word to press him to come home with us for half an hour, and he consented after a few moments' demur. Through the plantations we went, treading out sweet smells from the damp grass, and through the gardens, to the house; and, as every step revealed more and more the grandeur of Lelgarde's kingdom, I saw poor Harry Goldie grow graver and more constrained.

By an accident which, on looking back upon it, struck me as a strange one, some trifle had gone wrong with the drawing-room chimney, and the evening fire, which was beginning to be needful, had been lighted in Miss Hilda's room. The butler met us with this information, and Lelgarde could not show her reluctance to entering the room before him and our guest; indeed, I think, it was forgotten in the gladness of this new event. We sat down and talked; but it was all made talk, not

talk that flowed naturally, as in the days gone by. Harry was awkward and depressed, and though, in answer to our questions, he told of his successes in his career, it was with a sigh, as if they were not worth much to him; while Lelgarde soon grew serious too, and shrank from every mention of Athelstanes and of our life there, as if it stung her; and yet I felt sure that now, for the first time, she was regretting the probable loss of her property. In every pause, and they were many, I saw Harry's eye turning to the unfinished picture, which might well excite his curiosity, and I dreaded each moment that he would refer to it. He did at last.

"That is a beautiful face," he said; "why has that picture never been finished?"

Lelgarde winced visibly, and she began: "It was in the house when I came——" and then stopped short.

"It must be by a good artist."

"No, I believe not; at least it is not by a celebrated one."

"That may be, but he was a good artist for all that," said Harry, and then he pulled up short at Lelgarde's languid answer.

"Very possibly;" which certainly sounded as if she wished to snub down his remarks. Soon after he sprang up, as if he were eager to be gone, and yet felt it a wrench to go.

"Good-bye," he said; "it has been a great pleasure to see you again; to see you in your kingdom." And he smiled a little.

Lelgarde held out her hand. I saw that she could scarcely keep from tears. Harry took the hand, and burst out as if he could not help it:

"I shall carry away a picture of you here in your grand old house. I am right glad to have seen you so bright and happy."

"Happy?" broke from Lelgarde, suddenly. "Oh! Harry, never judge from outside things. I am not one bit happy—if you only knew——"

"My dear, remember your promise," I interposed. Why was Harry Goldie, of all people, to be honoured with her confidence?

She checked herself at once, and said, with her little air of dignity, "Yes, I have not forgotten it. Harry, I cannot invite you to come here again; you will know why some day; but I hope we shall meet sometimes. Are you going to stay long at Trembleton?"

"I really don't know; I fancy not," said Harry, with bewildered looks; "but Miss Atheling, you must let me ask, could I,

without intruding on your confidence, be of any help to you? Indeed, I should rejoice most sincerely."

"Ah! if you could, Harry," she said, shaking her head; "but, tell me, where are you going now? Have you any friends at Trembleton?"

"I did not know that I had till some days ago," he answered, "but it appears I have. Do you know anything of a certain Mr. Graves? I suppose a lawyer—a man who has an office there, any way."

"Mr. Graves? why he is my lawyer."

"Oh, then, it must be all right; I was half afraid of some hoax," he said, with a look of considerable relief; then, in a reserved tone, "Yes, it is with him that I have some business. I hardly know yet of what sort."

The wild, almost impossible hope which darted into my own mind, I saw reflected on Lelgarde's face: she hesitated, she coloured, then, more as if speaking to herself than addressing him, she whispered:

"Do you know anything of Henry Hamilton?"

There was a start, a look of blank, almost angry surprise, a sudden reddening over cheek and brow, and he asked quickly:

"How do you know my name?"

"Then it is so," cried Lelgarde, her sweet sensitive face one sunbeam of genuine rejoicing, and she held out both hands. Had Harry so chosen he might have made it an embrace, but he only took the hands in his, and looked astonished into her eyes, as she went eagerly on:

"My dear cousin, oh, how we have looked for you. And now it is all come right, here, in your own house, in this very room, under your mother's picture. Oh, thank Heaven!"

Agitated weeping cut her short, and, as I received her into my arms, and met Harry's look of utter bewilderment, my only thought was to be quit of him till I could restore her to calmness.

"Go to Mr. Graves, and he will tell you what it all means," I said; and he obeyed without a word, like a man well-nigh stunned with amazement. For me, I gave thanks from my heart. It might have been better, but oh, dear me, it might have been much worse!

CHAPTER XII.

HARRY was sober and staid enough when next we saw him, which was not till the following day. He came, accompanied by Mr. Graves, who had put him through a rigorous examination, eliciting few facts but

those we already knew, except that when he left Hollyfield, taking the first name that came to hand, one that had belonged to a dead playmate, he told us, he went to London, and was kindly befriended by Mr. Lascelles, who, during his summer stay at the farm, had become much interested in the bright-faced boy, with his inherited talent for art. The rest we knew. I could readily understand how Harry's proud young spirit, chafing against the false position, had come to the impetuous resolve of casting off a name with such associations, and making a new one in a new world.

"Hang the money, and all that; nothing shall induce me to take it," were almost the first words I heard him say; "but I am glad that I need not be ashamed of my mother."

It was as well he should think so, I reflected, and I liked him better and better, as I saw what tender, chivalrous pity was ready to spring up for the weak woman who had marred so much of his life by mere cowardice and procrastination. As to his generous wish not to take his inheritance, that no one could of course give in to, as Mr. Graves made him understand in a cut and dried sentence that carried conviction with it; proceeding at once to lay plans for going with him first to Hollyfield, and then to London, thoroughly to establish his identity by means of Mr. Lascelles's and Mr. Benson's testimony; a step which the lawyer pronounced quite necessary before Lelgarde's abdication, willing and absolute as it was, could be considered final.

"This will not make you hate me, will it?" poor Harry said to her, in piteous appeal; and, in fact, after her first outspoken affection and joy, there had come a reaction, which made her grave and reserved enough to justify the question. She smiled, however, as she assured him that a cousin was a valuable possession to such a relationless creature as herself, but the smile was constrained, and the speech a set one. I did not wonder that Harry looked gloomy, and sighed deeply.

He slept that night at Mr. Graves's house, and on the following day they started on their journey. Within a few days they were back again, bringing such ample proofs as entirely settled the question. Henry Hamilton's career was distinctly traced from his birth to the present hour; it only remained for him to take possession.

It was the very afternoon of their return, and I thought that they had both left Athelstanes for Mr. Graves's house, when,

coming into the drawing-room, I was aware of Harry, standing by the fire, his arm on the mantelpiece, his forehead leaning upon it, the picture of everything that was disconsolate. At my exclamation of surprise he raised his head, and I saw tears on his face, tears which he was too utterly cast down to care to conceal. I pretended not to see, and fell to poking the fire. Suddenly he broke out:

"I believe that money was invented by the devil himself to make mischief, and break one's heart."

"What is the matter?" I asked, half inclined to laugh, for my heart was lighter than it had been for many a day.

"Matter? How can you ask? Can't you see she hates the sight of me? And no wonder, coming to take away her home, and make a mess of her life. And now I have gone and made it worse than ever."

"What have you been doing?"

"Making an ass of myself, as I always do; speaking out just when I ought to have held my tongue. Any fool might have seen it was the wrong moment, just the most insulting, beastly, stupid thing I could have done. Only I thought that she might have seen, have known that it is nothing new."

A light broke upon me suddenly.

"Have you been—speaking to Lelgarde?" I asked, vaguely. And Harry answered not, nor stirred from his dejected attitude, till we heard the slow sweep of drapery, always the announcement of Lelgarde's dignified step.

"She will think there is no getting rid of me," he said, with a nervous start, and vanished over the low window-sill just as her hand was on the door.

I was sometimes a little afraid of Lelgarde, and never had she looked so unapproachable as now. Her face was flushed, and her eyes nearly extinguished. She had evidently been crying her heart out; but she looked full at me, as if she defied me to make any remark thereon, and seated herself in silence at the writing-table, absorbed apparently in pen, ink, and account-book.

"Joan," she said presently, in a dry, business tone, "Mr. Graves says that it would be unreasonable and unkind to refuse the provision which my cousin wishes to make for us, and I am anxious beyond everything to avoid any appearance of ill-will; but the sum he named is preposterous. I am writing to tell Mr. Graves that I have no objection to consenting that the estate should be charged with three

hundred pounds a year for me, which will enable us to live."

"But, my dear——"

"Let me finish," she said, impatiently; "we will leave this house to-morrow. The under-housemaid here, who is just the servant we shall want, will stay with us, and she can pack up and follow us in a few days."

"Would you mind telling me where we are to go?" I asked, meekly.

"I told you," returned Lelgarde, petulantly (she never had), "that we will go back to our own old lodgings first and look about us; there are nice, cheap little places in the north of Scotland, or perhaps in Galway——"

"Yes; or in Nova Zembla, I dare say. Now, Lelgarde, you are really silly—no, don't look so—I *will* speak, and you *shall* listen. I do not know what your cousin has been saying to you, or you to him, but I feel quite sure that you have treated him abominably."

"You know nothing about it, Joan."

Then I was downright angry.

"Child," I said, "could you not see years ago that he worshipped the ground you trod on? But he could not speak while you had neither of you a penny—still less when you were rich, and he poor—but now——"

"Now he feels bound to ask me to be his wife, that I may not be turned out of Athelstanes," she cried, the angry tears gushing from her eyes; "it is just like him—honourable as he is—but this is a humiliation I may be spared," and up went the little proud Atheling head.

But I was not to be snubbed, and I went on trying to say something really cutting.

"Well, Lelgarde, I did not know that you thought so much about money."

Then she turned upon me with the grand air which sat so quaintly on her soft girlish beauty.

"You assume that I am attached to Mr. Hamilton; pray let me be free to act as I like in this matter above all others." And she swept off in a state of offended dignity, leaving me inwardly marvelling at the density of man and the perversity of woman.

When we met at dinner, she was all softness and sweetness, and in the evening she hung about me in fond penitence for her little ebullition of temper; but her resolution to depart the next day was still unshaken; and I felt that I dared not venture on the delicate ground again, and could only trust it all to love and time.

Shall I ever forget the night that fol-

lowed? I was dreaming that Lelgarde and I sat over the fire together, and that suddenly Miss Hilda, or rather her picture, stood before us, brandishing a torch, which filled all the room with smoke—that Lelgarde seized my arm, and cried in great terror, "She says she will destroy us all if I do not consent to marry him; but I never will——" and that, as I turned to her, begging her to consent, the smoke caught my breath. I struggled, choked, and started up in bed awake, to find myself still struggling and choking, and the smoke of my dream a very overpowering reality.

There was so much old woodwork about the house, and some of the old-fashioned kitchen arrangements were so perilous, that the dread of fire had never long been absent from me, and I felt in an instant that this dread was realised.

I was in one moment at Lelgarde's side; but she was so stupefied by the smoke that some seconds passed before I could rouse her, and precious time was lost; I remember wrapping her in her dressing-gown and a fur cloak, the first things that came to hand, and ringing the bell violently. I suppose I also threw on some covering myself, but it all seemed like a dream as I look back on it. The fire was in the wing which contained Miss Hilda's room, but it was fast spreading to the hall, and threatening the old oak staircase. We found afterwards that it had originated in the laundry—some carelessness of the servants, who were all in a state of gossip and bewilderment—the state of affairs having oozed out somehow, though the formal announcement was deferred till after our departure.

In the gallery we were met by a flock of screaming maids, while shouts from without assured us that the fire had been seen, and that help was at hand. At the stair-head Lelgarde stopped.

"Where is Mrs. Bracebridge?" she asked in her clear voice, audible amid the roar of sounds. No one knew; the old woman slept in a higher story, and was so hard of hearing, that the noise had probably failed to rouse her.

"She must be seen to," said my sister; "go on, Joan, I will join you;" and she sped away before I could stop her. In another moment I found myself seized by a man's arm—the butler's, as it turned out—and hurried along through smoke, and perilously close to flame, till blinded, breathless, and staggering, I felt the damp, cold air of night, and found myself among a dishevelled group out on the gravel sweep. And no Lelgarde.

I was rushing back to seek her, when the butler forcibly held me back.

"For God's sake don't, ma'am! Look at the staircase."

The old oak burnt like tinder, and the hand-rail was already blazing. At that same instant I saw Lelgarde appear at an upper window—that of Mrs. Bracebridge's room—alone, her hair streaming, her arms stretched out. She was probably crying for help, but her voice was drowned. I turned away in despair, and found my hand seized by Mrs. Bracebridge, who, crying bitterly, sobbed out that she had escaped among the first, and "Why, oh! why, had that sweet young lady gone into danger for her?" I shook her off, her tears infuriated me, and rushed up to some men who were bringing ladders. I pointed to the window, towards which the flames were already creeping, and implored them to lose no time. In one moment the longest ladder was fixed—agony! it was far too short. Two ladders lashed together only reached to the heavy ledge which ran round the window immediately below—a ledge so narrow that it would barely give a foothold for an instant. Lelgarde evidently saw it, and read her doom; she folded her hands. I knew she was praying; I tried to pray too, but oh! I could not. I could only send up one mighty cry of anguish. I felt a touch on my shoulder, and Harry's face, white and set, was close to mine.

"Is she there?" he asked. I pointed upwards.

"I see," and his eye measured the distance; "I think it will be all right," he said; and somehow I felt as if all were safe. There was a coolness in his eye, a steady resolve in his voice, like a tower of strength to rest on. One moment's hurried talk with the men, and then Harry, and one of the tallest of them, both mounted. What did they propose to do? A gasp from the breathless crowd announced that they were at the top of the ladder. For some seconds I could not look; but at last, forcing myself to raise my eyes, I saw the man mounted on the topmost rung, and supporting himself with his hands against the wall, while Harry, using his shoulders as a stepping-stone, swung himself up to the window-sill, and disappeared within the room.

Lelgarde told me afterwards that, in her terror and bewilderment, and fear for his safety, she had implored him to leave her to her fate, but that when he answered uncertainly, "Nonsense! just let me put

my arm round your waist, and shut your eyes!" she had felt that he was her master, and had done, unquestioning, what he told her. Her instinctive trust in him gave her self-control, and enabled her to be perfectly still during the dreadful moment when he lifted her down into the arms of the man who was waiting to receive her; and in a few seconds more I had her fast in mine, and felt her poor dizzied head resting on my shoulder. Oh! the comfort of feeling her safe, with her heart throbbing against my own; but, in an instant, she started from me, to watch, with breathless anxiety, Harry's perilous descent. It was no easy matter; for precious moments had been spent in Lelgarde's rescue, and before the man could return to his assistance, smoke and flame were bursting from some of the windows fearfully near where he was. Lelgarde hid her face again:

"Pray, Joan, pray!" I heard her whisper with tightened breath; and pray I did, with all my soul. It was not for the master of Athelstanes, nor even for my Lelgarde's possible husband, but for Harry himself—the bright-faced boy of last year—the prompt, vigorous man, our stay and comfort on this eventful night—that my heart was pouring itself out in earnest supplication. And our prayers were heard. Cool head, strong nerves, and steadfast spirit did their work, and he was with us again to meet our eager, thankful welcome, and to read the unmistakable affection on Lelgarde's tearful face. She met him with outstretched hands—tried hard to thank him, but could not.

"Thank God!" was all she could murmur, and he echoed it, reverently bowing his head.

"Poor old house!" was Lelgarde's next remark; "I am afraid they are not saving much for you."

"Hang the old house! Let it go to blazes, as it is going!" was his answer; "I have got all I care to get out of it. Lelgarde, look me in the face. What good do you believe that house would do me, if you were not standing here, living, by my side?"

I heard no answer; I only saw that the hands were clasped tight and tighter yet; and then, in another instant, Harry was first among the workers, organising the efforts of the firemen just arrived from Trembleton, too late to be of much use, dashing into the smoke again, and bearing out enormous weights as if they were

feathers—warning away those who were venturing too near—shaking off burning flakes and drenching showers as if he did not feel them; evidently quite changed in his opinion as to the value of what the old house contained. He took the command of everything, even more by dint of his natural superiority than because he was beginning to be recognised as master of Athelstanes, and thankfully I acknowledged him as the man that of all others I should have chosen as a husband for my darling, and marvelled at the wondrous workings of Providence.

The sun rose on a scene of ruin melancholy to look upon; the trodden down paddock, the heaps of rescued valuables, the dreary, smoke-blackened crowd; and there stood Harry and Lelgarde, amid the smouldering wreck of their ancestral home—hand clasped in hand—the happiest of human creatures.

Athelstanes has been rebuilt, and has been my happy home for many a year; but the name of Atheling has passed away for ever. Harry utterly refused to give up the one that had been his father's, and I am not sure that at the bottom of her heart Lelgarde had not a secret dread that Miss Etheldreda would find it impossible, under such circumstances, to rest in her grave; for she still half believes that she was really visited by the spirit of the poor mother, who could not be at peace till the wrong had been righted, and her son established in his inheritance. Harry and I smile, and hold our own belief—a solitary piece of disloyalty to our queen, whose dignity increases as her girlish grace declines. Be that as it may, no angry ghosts wander about Athelstanes now; perhaps they are scared away by the merry noises that resound through hall and corridor, perhaps appeased by the ever-increasing tribe of true Atheling faces that lift up blue eyes in solemn wonder to such of the family portraits as have survived the fire.

That of Hilda Atheling is not among the number, and it is better so; better that her memory should gently fade away, and the story of sorrow and evil-doing should be laid at rest for ever in her quiet grave.

Next week will be commenced

A NEW SERIAL STORY,

ENTITLED

THE YELLOW FLAG.

By EDMUND YATES,

Author of "BLACK SHEEP," "NOBODY'S FORTUNE," &c.

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